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THE WORLD AND THE WEEK

American Intelligence Comes Second to None

By MICHAEL LEIGH

Deplorable Attack

Our Central Intelligence Agency has come in for a lot of panning lately, and that is to be deeply deplored. Allen Dulles is doing a fine

RECENT espionage case involving a beauty named Irmgard Schmidt has our side looking like a pack of fools when it is safe to say the opposite is the case.

According to news releases—and we were behind 'em—the beautiful brunette slinked and talked her way into the hearts of—to be nice about it—some of our top intelligence men and great damage might have resulted. It is a question if a physical combination of Turner, Monroe, Lollabrigida, Lamar and Mae West could have done that.

There was never and never will be an effective and beautiful woman spy since Delilah started the racket—and it might be pointed out, even then, that Samson's boys had no counter-intelligence system.

If it comes to that, there was never an intelligence system yet that was better than the performance counter-intelligence system opposing it. The success of the opposing side does not so much depend upon the excellence of its agents as upon the excellence of opposing counter-agents. Bad counter-agents mean successful opposition agents, and that's all there is to it.

Only rarely do exposes of Red agents break into the news in the West. In the first place, it's bad strategy. Such exposes as there are, are for propaganda purposes and the preparation of the Western peoples themselves, as well as the enemy, of some future move that otherwise would raise democratic squawks much less fusses in the Red house.

Overlooked Point

And then everyone is appalled that Reds could infiltrate so far and be so good, and everyone forgets how much better are the men who uncover them.

The best police and secret service systems in the world are the British and American, with the French a close second. And any study of the British intelligence and counter-intelligence setup will reveal one thing—the British always set themselves up as slow-moving suckers.

Always the enemy agent is a genius. Vast tribute is paid to them, oh, vast tribute, indeed!, and seldom does it occur to anyone that these geniuses were caught, after all, and paid the penalty. The same trend is to be noted on the American scene, and we may be grateful for it.

For one thing, it is infinitely disarming, both at home and abroad. The dear knows how the Russians, for example, really see us but, if their own propaganda is anything to go by, we are a loud, noisy and brash people, subject to mass hysteria, extremely clumsy and emotionally far from stable.

Well, why not? When behind the scenes, behind all the noise and the screaming headlines and the clamor, we have a cold, regimented, highly efficient intelligence system working that could give lessons to their opposite numbers any or every day.

To digress a little, if three bodies are taken seriously in the world at large they are the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Britain's Scotland Yard and the French Surete. While only a fool would say one was better than the others, only a bigger fool would place bets that any one was worse. They are too smart to want to compete, for one thing, and in any event.

FBI Is Brilliant

For our own part, the FBI is one of the most brilliantly effective organizations of its kind the world has ever known. Never was better advice given than let the FBI do it, and that goes for many legislators as well as for the man-in-the-street. And the same is true of similar military arms.

For example, there was never a subversive uprooted in this country but the FBI didn't have the dope first, and that statement is made to include everybody, including those who have sought to graft



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radlines by exposes of jobs already done—and well done—by the men who are trained to do them.

The FBI, in itself, is a fine working example of counter-espionage. That all too often is overlooked. They don't sit around waiting for federal cases to break—they are on the job all the time. They have the men and the means and their job of crime prevention is as important as their job of crime detection. And the same is true of our intelligence branches.

Irmgard Schmidt didn't stand a chance from the beginning. In fact, her successor is tagged now. Had she been as important as all that, a little more than five years would have been handed out, and that's a safe bet. In fact, in all the circumstances and considering the occupation of Germany, the penalty could have been death—if her inroads had been serious.

It is entirely possible that her story might have been true—in fact, it is in the main acceptable. But it should be remembered that the Russians had nothing to lose and they must have had high doubts of her chances of success, in any case. But spies to them are expendable, as are Reds and the common Russian and, in fact, anyone of anything.

job and so are his men. Attacks upon the agency, which have been mainly political, are to be as much regretted as would be attacks upon the FBI itself and upon J. Edgar Hoover. Hoover is an example for every intelligent American, and not from anything he's ever said or, on the face of it, done.

Well, that's the way it goes. Irmgard Schmidts walk into top-secret places, and our intelligence brass are made to look a prize pack of fools. They may grin ruefully but, when it comes right down to it, they probably look upon it as all a part of a job and in a day's work, what they get paid for.

Every day and in every way espionage is going on, but there is little that is glamorous about it, few beauties to liven the score and lamentably few high jinks and cloak-and-dagger exploits. The spying is done by little men who observe little things and send in their reports to big men who hope to make big things by placing all the little things together. Sometimes, but rarely, they succeed.

But anyone who sells American intelligence short is making as big a mistake as the men who sent Irmgard Schmidt to certain prison. Her jail cell tells